ARTICLES

Is Nazism coming back to Europe?

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Is Nazism coming back to Europe? - EX...

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On April 9, 2024, after several months of debate, France passed a new amended anti-cult law, despite objections from the Senate and a complete rejection of the text on April 2.

The French Senate passed a new amended anti-cult law

According to the peculiar French system, however, if the Senate and the National Assembly hold irreconcilable positions on a bill, the vote of the National Assembly prevails. However, even though the government heavily lobbied the parliamentarians in favor of the text, the opposition was significant, even in the National Assembly: 146 votes in favor and 104 against.

The title of the law refers to 'reinforcing the fight against cultic deviances.' It is also claimed that during COVID, "cults" multiplied, and some spread anti-vaccination ideas. Thus, the law introduces a new crime – "incitement to refuse necessary medical or preventive treatment," – which is now punishable by up to one year in prison with a fine. It is clear that the implications extend far beyond COVID and vaccines.

It should be noted that the Council of State, while reviewing the bill, recommended excluding this provision, as it poses a threat to the freedom of speech and "freedom of scientific debate." The government, however, rejected the recommendation of the Council of State.

Anti-cult measures are also strengthened by allowing anti-cult organizations to participate in legal cases against "cults" as civil plaintiffs and by encouraging judges and prosecutors to seek the opinion of the governmental anti-cult agency MIVILUDES on groups they are judging or prosecuting. In addition, parliamentary amendments have also granted MIVILUDES a new and

enhanced status.

In November 2023, Dr. Raffaella di Marzio, an expert in the psychology of religion from Italy, the founder and Director of The Center for Studies on Freedom of Religion, Belief, and Conscience, contacted the French Senate.

Raffaella Di Marzio. Researcher in Psychology of Religion in Italy and the Director of The Center for Studies on Freedom of Religion Belief and Conscience (LIREC)

You can read the full version here.

Below are some important excerpts from this letter (Di Marzio, 2023):

“Dr. Raffaella di Marzio notes that despite the claimed intention to protect people from alleged harmful influences in “cults,” this bill poses a real threat to the fundamental rights of individuals and families belonging to religious minorities.

This law proposal is presented as a wish to protect individuals from harmful treatments, allegedly taking place inside “cults,” but according to her experience and my studies in this field, such a law proposal is posing a real threat to the free exercise of the fundamental rights of individuals and families belonging to religious minorities.

She draws particular attention to the idea, repeatedly emphasized in the bill, that “cults” commit psychological violence, so-called “mind manipulation” or

“psychological subjection” crime.

Unfortunately, badly influenced by media and the propaganda of “anti-cult” groups, some European governments set up courts of inquiry, parliamentary commissions, anti-cult squads and approved even laws against “cults,” or, in other words, against the alleged “mind manipulation crime” that “dangerous cults” would perpetrate against their followers, especially against children.”

But after conducting extensive research over 25 years, she discovered that the theory of “mind manipulation,” “brainwashing,” or “persuasive coercion” as applied to “sects” has no scientific basis.

Dr. Di Marzio also warned the French government against repeating the mistakes of her country’s past. The fact is that Italy has already passed a similar law. It happened in 1930 under Mussolini’s Fascist regime: the “plagio” law, which was the criminal offense of putting someone in a “complete state of subjugation.” The meaning of the Italian expression “plagio” [plagium in Latin] is the English word “brainwashing.”

Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler in Munich, June 1940

The idea of Mussolini, when he inserted the law in the penal code, was that anti-fascists were anti-fascists only because they were under the influence, and this law allowed him to put in jail some anti-fascists accused of exerting

such influence on others who eventually became anti-fascists too. It was a simple way to jail those who disagreed and resisted fascism.

In 1981, the Constitutional Court of Italy repealed the Plagio law. The article was repealed for many reasons, but there are several important ones that the expert highlighted:

- the first body of criticism was empirical: the phenomenon of plagio does not exist, nor can it be verified, if we presume that such a condition of subjugation cannot be achieved merely with psychological tools. Most psychiatrists agreed on this point. The problem was that such a rule was too vague and undetermined, therefore contrary to the constitutional principle of legality.
- the second body of criticism was political: the critics argued that the rule masked an attempt at ideological discrimination. Following this line of reasoning the judges ran the risk of judging lifestyles and any ideas that were contrary to prevailing social opinion or even to the court's majority opinion under the pretext of judging methods of indoctrination.

Being an expert in psychology and education, as well as the subject of Freedom of Religion or Belief and religious minorities, and supported by the scientific community on this issue, Dr. Di Marzio concluded that this idea is not based on scientific evidence or empirical research.

It is only the expression of an intolerant ideology of specific anti-cult groups that has already created tremendous harm to children and parents belonging to religious minorities in many countries.

> *"In conclusion, it is my belief that to approve repressive laws to combat the crime of "psychological subjection," as suggested by this law proposal, is not only useless, but also very dangerous for freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and democracy in general."*
>
> *Raffaella di Marzio*

Despite experts' warnings, the French government pushed the law through, proudly claiming that the new law criminalizes not beliefs but only the methods used to propagate certain beliefs. In reality, proof that beliefs were instilled using "illegal" methods often comes from anti-cultists or the media,

which classify beliefs as “cultic deviations.”

In reality, however, the proof that beliefs were instilled using “illegal” methods is either provided by anti-cult activists, who often are not experts, or by the media, which considers the beliefs as a “cult deviation.”

Leading international scholars note that France’s obsession with sects continues to make the country one of the worst places in the democratic world for freedom of religion and belief.

The second story comes from another founding country of the European Union, where anti-cultists have had a hand in the following practice. You will be surprised that a “democratic” country like Germany with its well-known past, is engaged in religious cleansing today.

Session of the Bundestag

According to a recent USCIRF (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom) report titled Religious Freedom Concerns in the European Union, Germany has been practicing what they call a “sect filter” for several decades. This filter requires anyone seeking employment or doing business with government institutions to sign a statement declaring that he or she is not a Scientologist and “do not use technology of L. Ron Hubbard,” the founder of Scientology.

In practice, these sect filters go so far as to ask whether you, any of your employees or even volunteers have attended a lecture organized by a Scientologist group, church, or related organization in the past three years. An

answer “yes” disqualifies you from any government employment or contracts. In addition, if you represent a company, you must terminate contracts with anyone who answers “yes” to this question in order to continue business with government entities.

Regardless of your views on Scientology, asking about a candidate’s religious beliefs and making it a factor during the hiring process is absolutely illegal.

According to the EU Employment Equality Directive and the European Convention on Human Rights, this is blatant discrimination based on religion, and thus violates Article 9 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion) as well as Article 14 (Prohibition of discrimination).

Moreover, while dozens of court rulings in Germany found that such “sect filters” are illegal, they have had no effect, and this illegal practice still continues today in Germany.

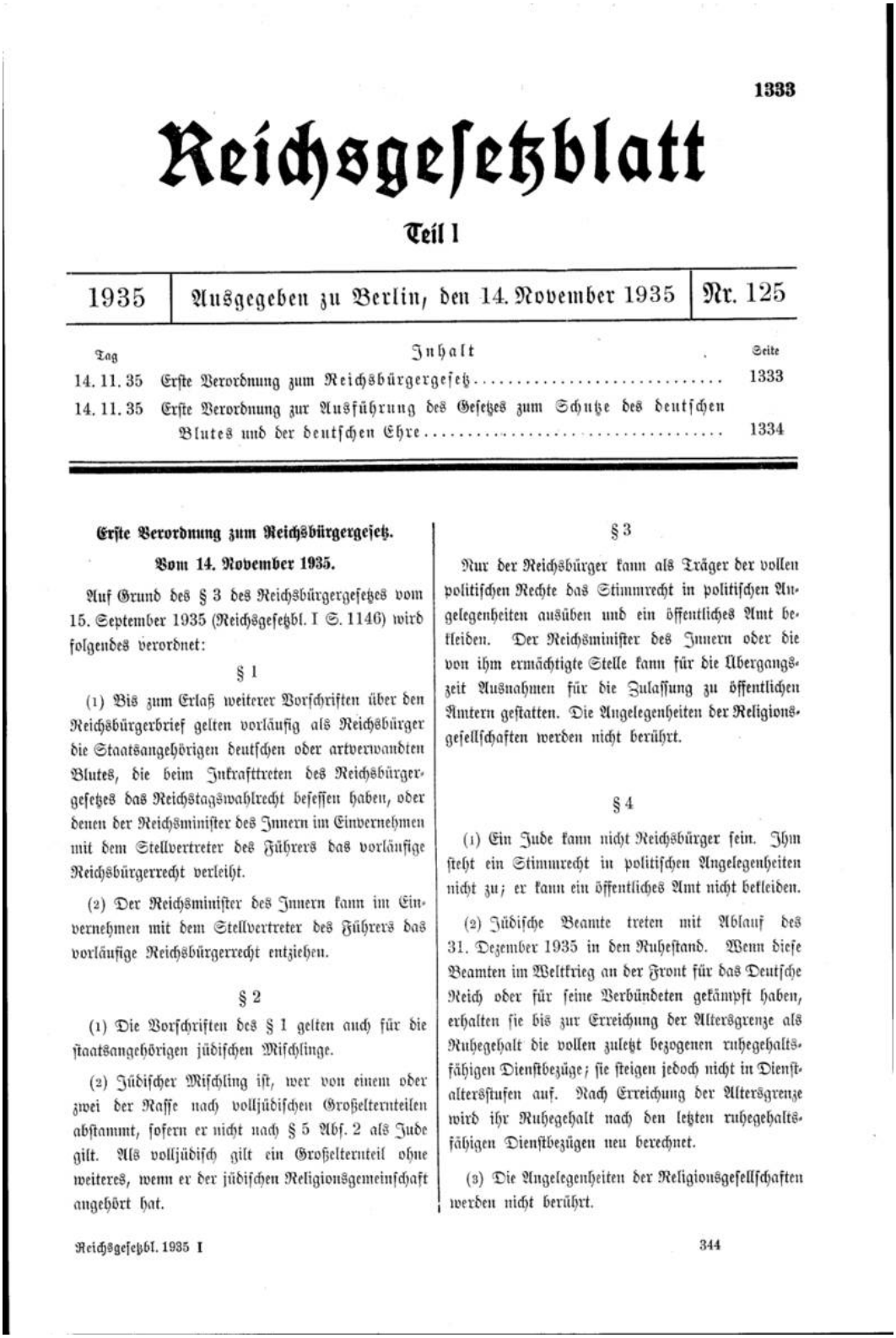
Can you imagine being barred from applying for a job, which you are perfectly qualified for, just because of your religious or philosophical beliefs? Even with the right qualifications, belonging to a specific religious group puts a shameful label on you and prevents you from getting a job that would support your family.

Without a job, salary, and essential resources, death isn’t far away. And when it comes to the planned death of an entire category of citizens belonging to a certain religious group or nationality, genocide is not that far away.

Such discriminatory practices, unfortunately, have occurred in many places and times throughout history, often with devastating consequences; and we know exactly what they lead to. Dehumanizing a segment of the population is a way to justify future hate crimes.

It’s even harder to imagine that this is happening in Germany—a country that, more than any other, suffered at the hands of Nazism.

In the mid-1930s, a series of laws were passed in Nuremberg that discriminated Jews and restricted their rights. Jews then, much like the Scientologists today, were barred from working in government jobsand. Professors were fired from universities, and workers from hospitals. Jews were prohibited from serving in the military and police.



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Reichsgesetzblatt

Teil I

1935	Ausgegeben zu Berlin, den 14. November 1935	Nr. 125

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Erste Verordnung zum Reichsbürgergesetz.

Vom 14. November 1935.

Auf Grund des § 3 des Reichsbürgergesetzes vom 15. September 1935 (Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 1146) wird folgendes verordnet:

§ 1

(1) Bis zum Erlaß weiterer Vorschriften über den Reichsbürgerbrief gelten vorläufig als Reichsbürger die Staatsangehörigen deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes, die beim Inkrafttreten des Reichsbürgergesetzes das Reichstagswahlrecht besessen haben, oder denen der Reichsminister des Innern im Einvernehmen mit dem Stellvertreter des Führers das vorläufige Reichsbürgerrecht verleiht.

(2) Der Reichsminister des Innern kann im Einvernehmen mit dem Stellvertreter des Führers das vorläufige Reichsbürgerrecht entziehen.

§ 2

(1) Die Vorschriften des § 1 gelten auch für die staatsangehörigen jüdischen Mischlinge.

(2) Jüdischer Mischling ist, wer von einem oder zwei der Rasse nach volljüdischen Großelternteilen abstammt, sofern er nicht nach § 5 Abs. 2 als Jude gilt. Als volljüdisch gilt ein Großelternteil ohne weiteres, wenn er der jüdischen Religionsgemeinschaft angehört hat.

§ 3

Nur der Reichsbürger kann als Träger der vollen politischen Rechte das Stimmrecht in politischen Angelegenheiten ausüben und ein öffentliches Amt bekleiden. Der Reichsminister des Innern oder die von ihm ermächtigte Stelle kann für die Übergangszeit Ausnahmen für die Zulassung zu öffentlichen Ämtern gestatten. Die Angelegenheiten der Religionsgesellschaften werden nicht berührt.

§ 4

(1) Ein Jude kann nicht Reichsbürger sein. Ihm steht ein Stimmrecht in politischen Angelegenheiten nicht zu; er kann ein öffentliches Amt nicht bekleiden.

(2) Jüdische Beamte treten mit Ablauf des 31. Dezember 1935 in den Ruhestand. Wenn diese Beamten im Weltkrieg an der Front für das Deutsche Reich oder für seine Verbündeten gekämpft haben, erhalten sie bis zur Erreichung der Altersgrenze als Ruhegehalt die vollen zuletzt bezogenen ruhegehaltsfähigen Dienstbezüge; sie steigen jedoch nicht in Dienstaltersstufen auf. Nach Erreichung der Altersgrenze wird ihr Ruhegehalt nach den letzten ruhegehaltsfähigen Dienstbezügen neu berechnet.

(3) Die Angelegenheiten der Religionsgesellschaften werden nicht berührt.

The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935

Let's also recall the Nazi directive signed by Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Reich Security Main Office; it established the procedures for suppressing certain religious societies and sects. The directive provided the list of community groups and teachings from astrologers to Christian Science followers, labeled as sects. Moreover, it ordered prohibition and eradication of

all organizations, clubs, and unions connected in any way to the groups included in the list.

The pogroms of Jewish shops in Nazi Germany

Back then, society at large seemed indifferent. At first glance, the issue didn't seem to affect each person individually, as the activities of Nazis and fascists started out by oppressing only certain groups of people united by race, ethnicity, or similar religious views. This problem, however, eventually affected everyone, as the inhumane actions of the Nazis escalated into a global war and genocide.

Today, the European Commission's inaction on Germany's "sect filters" and France's fascist-like law is highly alarming.

We see that anti-cultism is spreading like mold throughout the European Union and infiltrating the deepest power structures.

It is easy to throw stones at those considered as non-democratic countries and accuse them of criminal behavior and tyranny. The real challenge, however, is to track such criminal behaviors in countries where democracy is still alive. We must act decisively to eradicate these practices. Otherwise, the

European Union's relevance will fade, and its Charter of Fundamental Rights will become meaningless.

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In previous articles, we examined in detail the process of destroying democracy and freedoms, using Nazi Germany as an example. A key role in this process was played by the methodology of dehumanizing victims and creating an enemy image for the masses.

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